



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM LOCAL BRANCHES

OFFICERS ELECTED.—

Colgate University: Chairman, F. C. French.

Purdue University: Chairman, H. C. Pepper; Secretary, Otto Greiner.

Syracuse University: Chairman, W. P. Graham; Secretary, W. G. Bullard.

UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO.—At a meeting of the Faculty of the University last April, President Upham announced that thereafter professors and instructors would be on the basis of permanent tenure of office instead of annual appointment, which has been the custom for many years.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.—The local branch sends in the following interesting report of a committee on Country-wide Participation in University Appointments. The report has been referred to Committee B, on Methods of Appointment and Promotion. Comments upon it by local branches or members may be addressed to T. H. Morgan, Columbia University, Chairman of Committee B.

COUNTRY-WIDE PARTICIPATION IN UNIVERSITY APPOINTMENTS

A report by a committee to the local branch at the University of Chicago:

Introduction.—It has been assumed, almost invariably, that democratic control of university appointments implies that the particular local faculty concerned be endowed with the appointing power or, at least, with a power of initiative, which would be practically equivalent to such power. But clearly this would result in one of two situations both thoroughly undesirable. Either the faculty as a whole would follow the recommendations of the individual department concerned, or else each member of the faculty would try to act independently. In the former case

the appointing power would in effect be an individual department, moreover at a moment when its strength and judgment is below normal, since the vacancy to be filled may be that caused by the death or departure of its strongest member. And, even at *normal* strength the average department of an average institution may not possess the very best of judgment, nor be inclined to act with the purest of intentions. The other alternative, however, is still worse. Without the guidance of expert opinion of some kind, the vast majority of the votes would be cast ignorantly and at random or, worse yet, degenerate into expressions of personal and impure motives.

It seems to us, therefore, that the local faculty concerned is not the body best fitted for the initiative in making appointments. A method should rather be devised for enabling our institutions to profit by advice the wisdom of whose source is above doubt. This can be accomplished by appealing to the best professional opinion available *throughout the country* rather than only that available at a given place, thus securing democratic control and efficiency at the same time.

The following plan is intended to accomplish these purposes by making use of certain strong organizations already well established; our National Societies for the several branches of learning.* It is not proposed to take away from the administrative officers any of the power which is rightfully theirs. It merely provides for those among them who are honest and intelligent a really reliable source of information. It provides for an open, public, and efficient method of accomplishing a purpose which honest administrators, at present, usually attempt to accomplish by secret, confidential, and haphazard communications which fail to obtain the best results precisely on account of their lack of system and publicity. The plan is also intended to help those institutions whose administrative heads are not imbued with pure intentions or who lack the necessary information for wise action, by making it increasingly difficult to hide impure motives,

*While these societies seem to us the best agencies for this, the American Council on Education, the American Association of University Professors, the Association of American Universities, the National Research Council, the National Academy of Science, might function instead. In what follows, the term "learned societies" may be taken to cover all of these. Perhaps several of these organizations might cooperate in such matters.

and by taking away any reasonable excuse for lack of information.

The Plan

First. Publication of vacancies.—Every learned society should establish in its official journal a special department devoted to the announcement of vacancies. The administrative heads of all colleges and universities should be informed of the existence of this department and should be requested to avail themselves of it. The announcements should be as explicit as possible on the items of title, salary, grade and amount of work, probable date of appointment, address to which applications should be sent, date after which no applications will be considered, whether a specialist is desired or preferred, and if so in what special subject. If any of these items are subject to any uncertainty—if, for instance, as is often the case, an institution is not willing to announce a definite sum as salary because it would be willing to pay widely different salaries according to the exigencies of the case—the vacancy and its general character should nevertheless be announced.

Second. The filling of major positions.—It seems to us* that the following plan might serve as a basis for discussion: If an institution desires the services of the society in making an appointment, it should send a request to the secretary describing as closely as possible the nature of the position to be filled and the kind of person desired. The secretary should acknowledge the request and receive assurance from the institution that it is willing to bear the expenses of the nominating committee, which expenses would in most cases be very small. Having received this assurance, the secretary should inform every member of the governing board† of the society, requesting him to make out and send to the secretary before a specified date a list of six names (members or non-members of the society) in order of preference, these to stand as his nominations for the nominating committee. Upon the specified day the secretary should tabu-

*All of the details are mere suggestions, capable of much variation.

†The ex-presidents of the society might replace the governing board for this purpose, or else a committee of the society especially elected or appointed.

late the votes. The person receiving the highest number of votes should be appointed as chairman, and the two or more following him in the number of votes should be named as members of the nominating committee. It might be provided, if that were thought advisable, that no two men employed in the same institution should be members of the committee. All ties, whether for chairmanship or membership, should be decided by the secretary.*

If any person so elected to membership in a nominating committee is unable or unwilling to serve, the committee should be completed by election of the person next below him in the total number of votes. Acceptance of membership on the committee should imply renunciation on the part of the person accepting of any intention on his part of being himself a candidate for the position under consideration. (If thought desirable, a rule could be made to insure representation on the committee of the institution especially concerned in the filling of the vacancy.)

As soon as the committee has been finally constituted, the fact should be announced and the names of the members published. This should be coupled with a request to all applicants to forward their applications, a list of their publications and other documents to the chairman, and as far as possible also to the other members of the committee.

It should be the duty of the committee of three elected in this way to consider and weigh carefully the claims of all applicants. But beyond this, it should in all cases survey the entire field and select three or more men who, according to its opinion, would be the best available persons for filling the position under consideration. It should arrange these men in order of preference, giving a brief discussion of the reasons for its decision. The possibility of bracketing two or three men of apparently equal merit should not be excluded, however. The report of the committee should then be forwarded to the institution concerned, for any action which it may choose to take. The list of names recommended by the committee should also be published, preferably, perhaps, in alphabetic order.

*Instead of selecting a new committee for each case, in the way indicated, a committee might be elected for a stated term to consider all cases which would arise during its term of office.

Most of the work of the committee should be done by correspondence. In many cases, however, it would be necessary, and it would always be desirable, for the committee to have an opportunity for oral discussion. It is not likely that an institution willing to take advantage of this plan would object to the expenses arising from this.

Third. The filling of minor positions.—We can see little prospect of success in any attempt on the part of the learned societies to assist in making such appointments, on account of the large number of such positions, and the great amount of work and expense that would be involved. We suggest, however, a standing committee of the governing board appointed for a year, to meet upon the days assigned to meetings of the society, whose duty it would be to make recommendations of this character, the material in each case being properly collected and sifted beforehand by an intelligent clerical assistant. It seems quite likely, however, that the careful filling of major positions would do away with any great necessity of reform in the methods of filling minor positions.

Respectfully submitted,

W. D. HARKINS.

W. A. NITZE.

E. J. WILCZYNSKI.